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COUNTRY

Bulgaria

REPORT

SUBJECT

Road Construction in the Rhodope Mountain Area

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1. Early in 1952 (sic), the Bulgarian military authorities requested the Ministry of Construction and Roads to make a study and to immediately prepare plans for constructing six new strategic roads through the Rhodope Mountains. The Ministry, as well as the construction firms, stopped all other work to comply with this request. All the technicians of the Ministry were assigned to drawing up and compiling plans.
2. A meeting was held at the Ministry of Construction and Roads between several Bulgarian generals, among whom was General Panchevski, present Minister of Defense (at that time, an under secretary), and a Soviet engineering major in the uniform of a Bulgarian Army major. At the meeting, the military representatives requested that the construction work be completed in 1950 and that military personnel be used for the project. The Minister, however, wanted the work to be done by the civilian construction organizations.

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because of the great scarcity of civilian workers, it would be impossible to complete the project by the date requested. After a lengthy discussion, it was decided that the work should be done by the Trudovaks under the technical direction of representatives of the Ministry of Construction and Roads.

4. The reason for building the six strategic roads requested by the military authorities is the great scarcity of roads in the Greek border area. At the meeting, the generals declared that the roads were needed to fulfill the order of battle plans which at this time consisted of disregarding the Yugoslav frontier and concentrating on increasing security measures on the Greek frontier.

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5. [redacted] the  
six roads were to pass through the Rhodopes toward the Greek border and  
25X1 [redacted] they would have the following general characteristics:

25X1 a. They would not have to be masterpieces;  
b. They would presumably carry only second class, not heavy, traffic;  
c. They would be five meters wide with one-meter shoulders;  
d. They would have curves with a minimum radius of 50 meters which would easily handle tank traffic; and  
e. They would be paved with gravel and topped with macadam.

6. Actual construction was begun in early 1950 and was to have been completed by the end of 1950. The work was greatly speeded up in September and  
25X1 [redacted] the work was completed on schedule. At the beginning of the project, it was estimated that the cost would be 2,400,000,000 leva.

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